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RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - PARA 2,3 GARBLED/MISSING TEXT

NSC FOR MGAVIN, LETIM  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV PHUM KDEM SU](#)

SUBJECT: UNAMID Workers Kidnapped in Darfur; No Americans Involved

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On Saturday August 29, armed men seized two expatriates working in a civilian capacity for the joint U.N.-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the peacekeeping force in Darfur. One kidnapping victim is a Nigerian citizen who may have family in the United States, and the second is a Zimbabwean citizen. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) On Saturday August 29, armed men seized two expatriates working in a civilian capacity for the joint U.N.-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the peacekeeping force in Darfur. The assailants, who are as yet unidentified, took a male Nigerian citizen and female Zimbabwean citizen UN Volunteer (UNV) from their residence in the town of Zalingei in West Darfur in the early morning hours of Saturday, August 29. According to UN reports, the kidnappers entered the UNAMID residence between 0330 and 0430 and departed with the two staff shortly thereafter.

3. (SBU) On August 29, UNAMID spokesman Nouredine Mezni noted that the kidnapping of UNAMID staff was a worrying development. "We are appealing to them to release the captives. We are here to help the people of Darfur," he said, adding the kidnappers had phoned UNAMID soon after the abduction saying they were ready to talk. Mezni declined to give details of the kidnappers' demands but Sudanese State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Abdel Baqi Al-Jailani stated that they are bandits and "have asked for a ransom".

4. (SBU) Conoff investigated rumors that the male captive holds dual citizenship in America and Nigeria. The PIERS passport database retrieved no results for an individual with his name, and, as of August 29, the captive was not registered at any U.S. Embassy. UNAMID staff told Conoff and confirmed to Charge August 30 that they have no reason to believe either abductee holds U.S. citizenship, but stated that the male captive does have a wife and children in the United States. Conoff called the Nigerian embassy to confirm this information, but the Nigerian Embassy was unaware that the abduction had occurred. Conoff requested that UNAMID follow up by providing any information they receive as to the captive's family in the United States.

5. (SBU) The kidnapping is the fourth kidnapping of international staff to take place since March 2009, but is the first time that kidnappers have targeted UNAMID. Two women from Irish charity GOAL remain in captivity after being taken hostage in early July; August 30 is the 58th day of their captivity. The abduction occurred two days after UNAMID's departing commander, General Martin Luther Agwai, told reporters that Darfur suffered from banditry but was no longer in a state of war.

6. (SBU) Zalingei is located in West Darfur's Jebel Marra area, approximately 100 km (or 60 miles) east from the Chadian border. It is the birthplace of some of Darfur's best-known rebels, including Sudan Liberation Army (SLA/AW) leader Abdel Wahed Mohamed Ahmed al-Nur, and is traditionally a hotbed of anti-government sentiment. SLA/AW has denied that any of its fighters were responsible for the kidnapping, suggesting involvement of government-allied militias.

7. (SBU) COMMENT: The kidnapping adds pressure to the strife-torn region's relief effort, already reeling from bandit attacks, carjackings, and the government's expulsion of humanitarian agencies.  
Whitehead